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NAMRU-3 – Navy Medical Research has a home in Cairo, Egypt

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By Capt. John Gilstad, commanding officer, U.S. Naval Research Unit No. 3

U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery established NAMRU-3 in 1946.

Navy Medicine's research and development spans the globe and is led by Naval Medical Research Center in Silver Spring, Maryland.

This is the first in a series of six blogs focused on the research and surveillance conducted at NAMRU-3 in Cairo, Egypt.

There are three overseas infectious disease research and surveillance activities: U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit (NAMRU) No. 3 in Cairo Egypt, with a major field site in Accra Ghana; NAMRU-6 in Lima, Peru, with a field laboratory in Iquitos, Peru; and NAMRU-Asia in Singapore, with field site in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The diverse capabilities and geographical locations of these laboratories are integral to the broad mission of Navy Medicine.

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civilian populations in the North Africa and Mediterranean campaigns. At the Cairo field office of the Commission, Army and Navy scientists worked alongside British and Egyptian colleagues on the grounds of the Abbassia Fever Hospital to study disease prevention and control measures.

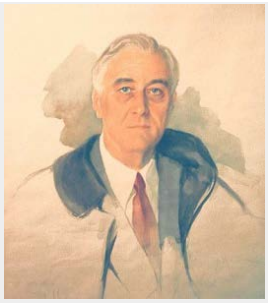

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FIGURE 26.—U.S. Army medical personnel inoculate Egyptian civilians for typhus.

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As the Typhus Commission wound up after the war, this fruitful collaboration was perpetuated by the Navy, as the U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery established NAMRU-3 in 1946. The following year, cholera re-occurred in Cairo for the first time in almost half a century, and NAMRU-3 embarked on what has become almost seven decades of productive scientific engagement with Egyptian colleagues, addressing infectious diseases of military and public health importance that are endemic or emerging in Egypt and the broader Middle East – North Africa region.

Today NAMRU-3 science is funded primarily by the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center (AFHSC) and the Department of State Biosecurity Engagement Program (BEP), and is focused on syndrome, pathogen, and vector surveillance networks in Egypt and the region; laboratory and epidemiologic support to outbreak response (recently the Ebola Virus Disease and the avian influenza (A/HSNl) outbreak in Egypt); and training for host nation public health and laboratory practitioners.

The professional team of Navy medical and Egyptian scientists and researchers working shoulder-to-shoulder at NAMRU-3 represent years of experience in science, medicine and military health.

The Center for Disease Control's (CDC) embedded Global Disease Detection (GDD) unit complements these product lines with CDC and USAID-funded disease surveillance, and training and technical assistance in public health. CDC investigators also address hospital acquired infections, antimicrobial resistance, viral hepatitis, and the Global Health Security Agenda.

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experience in science, medicine and military health. Each one of them are focused on making the world a safer place for all.

Over the next few weeks, Navy Medicine Live will feature first-hand accounts from each of the three principal research programs at NAMRU-3 today: vector biology; viral and zoonotic diseases; and bacterial and parasitic diseases. We'll also feature the GDD and their work. Then we'll close the NAMRU-3 research series with an update from our detachment in Accra, Ghana, including intrepid activities in Liberia in support of Operation United Assistance and the post-outbreak transition.

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